

Smiles from Daphne ... but it's easy for Jeffrey

DAPHNE Trimble's smile in defeat couldn't hide her disappointment at UCUNF's disappointing showing in Lagan Valley.

She graciously shook DUP victor Jeffrey Donaldson's hand but was keen to give an explanation for the massive difference in votes between the two unionist parties.

"I was selected at the end of February and did not have months and years to prepare this campaign".

However, she declared the result had built on her party's 2005 votes representing an appetite for the Ulster Unionist alliance with the Conservative Party, which she said would bring Northern Ireland into mainstream politics.

But the size of the DUP victory was evident that the voters had shown little appetite for the Ulster Unionist/Tory alliance.

Mr Donaldson's victory speech was drowned out by the cheers of his supporters, who took to their feet as his result was announced.

He said it was a "fairly fought and well-won campaign" which was "the essence of democracy".

Lagan Valley

Heather McGarrigle
IN LISBURN



He was heckled as he spoke out against "rumour mills" and declared that democracy was about giving the truth to the people.

He said he was "committed to working hard for all the people of this constituency", and pledged to work towards gaining investment, securing jobs and "giving voice to young people".

The DUP man spoke passionately about division in unionism and said the voters he spoke to had echoed his views.

He insisted that the unionist parties should now be united and that working together they would "win seats back for unionism".

He concluded by thanking the voters for their endorsement.

With just over 3000 votes the TUV's Keith Harbinson took fourth place, over 1000 votes be-



Taking the salute: victorious Lagan Valley candidate Jeffrey Donaldson raises his arms after the result is declared COLM O'REILLY/PACEMAKER

hind Alliance.

He said the TUV contest for the seat was always going to be a "massive mountain to climb" but that the party was happy to have fought a campaign based on principled policy.

Trevor Lunn joked that he "would have preferred another 10,000 votes", but was delighted with the Alliance result, made all the sweeter by reports of Naomi Long's shock win in East Belfast.

He said: "It makes this the best night ever, we can move forward with confidence and good spirits and look forward to next year's assembly elections".

The SDLP's Brian Heading was also upbeat and focused on his

family's support. He paid tribute to campaign work by his daughter, who joined him on the election trail with his young grandson.

He declared the Lagan Valley race a "good clean fight".

A chorus of jeers met Paul Butler as he blamed boundary changes for the reduced Sinn Fein vote in constituency.

The TUV supporters were vocal throughout his speech; Mr Butler retorted that the party would need to embrace partnership politics if they had hopes of gaining assembly seats.

All in all a night which brought few surprises, disappointment to some, but high emotions throughout.

the statistics lagan valley

DUP HOLD

Paul Butler SF	1,465
Jeffrey Donaldson DUP	18,199
Keith Harbinson TUV	3,154
Brian Heading SDLP	1,835
Trevor Lunn Alliance	4,174
Daphne Trimble UCUNF	7,713

Majority 10,486

Turnout 56.23%